

The Lincoln-Douglas-Breckinridge-Bell Campaign

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in this respect that all acts creating any debt shall provide a fund for its payment, and that all acts providing for extraordinary expenditures, except in case of an invasion or insurrection, and calculated to establish an onerous indebtedness on the part of the State shall be referred to the people for their action and shall not take effect unless approved by the vote of the people.

In a letter accepting the nomination, James F. Wilson gave at length his views upon these declarations. Upon them all he stood four square. The first he considered essential to "the safety of the doctrines of Freedom and Human Rights." As to the third, he held that "all officers should be elected by the people." Of the last, he maintained "that the true policy is to refer propositions for creating State indebtedness to the people for their action, with a view to affording those who have to bear the burden an opportunity to say whether or no they will accept it." In this connection, it is a pertinent comment that upon the organization of the Constitutional Convention James F. Wilson himself was named as Chairman of the Committee on State Debts, that to him fell the lot of drafting the restriction, and that his report, save for raising the limitation from one hundred thousand dollars to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, was virtually adopted as presented.

In the last days of the campaign, the fight turned upon the delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Should the Constitution embody the principle of Freedom? The decision was rendered on November 4th in 1,207 votes for Wilson and 1,122 votes for Coop. At the same time there were cast by Republicans 1,188 votes for Fremont; by Democrats 1,023 votes for Buchanan; and by Americans and Whigs combined 206 votes for Fillmore. The strength of the sentiment against the extension of slavery was unmistakable.

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS-BRECKINRIDGE-BELL CAMPAIGN.

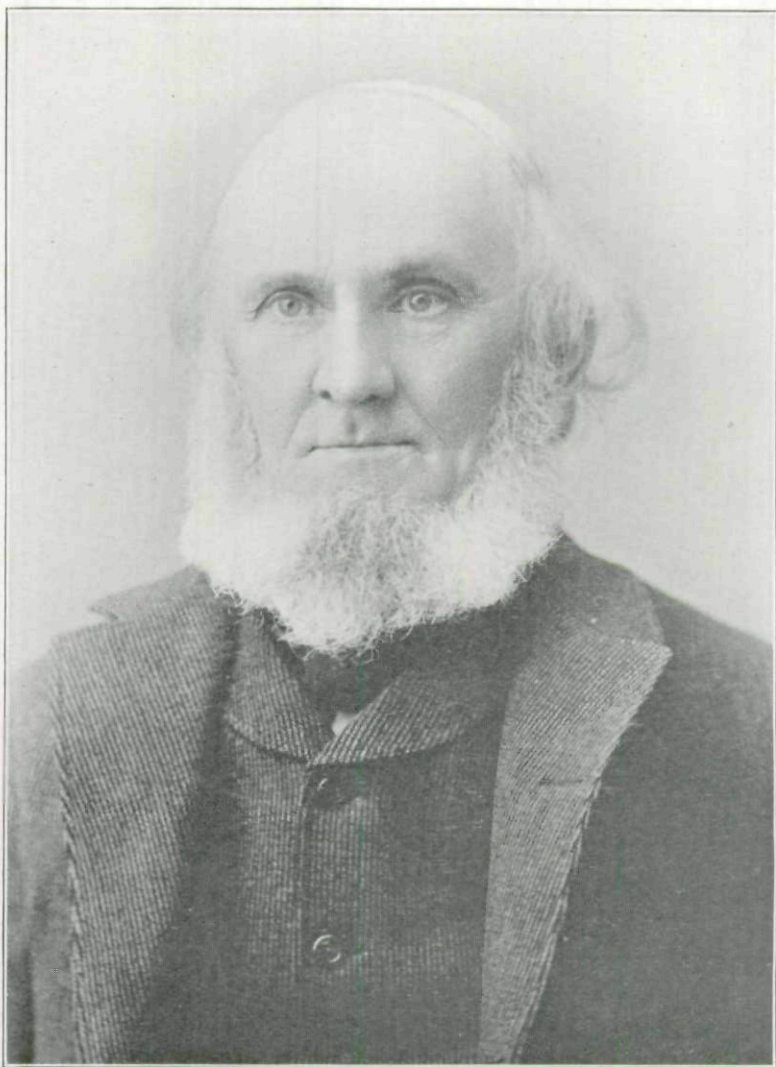
For three years slavery was a subject of constant and earnest public discussion. In them the consciences of men were searched out and prepared for the coming struggle.

On January 18, 1860, a special State Convention met at Des Moines to name delegates at large to the National Convention, not yet called, of the Republican party. One of these delegates, of whom there were nine, was James F. Wilson.

There was no general expression of preference for any Presidential candidate. "Vindex," who wrote *The Ledger* concerning this gathering, correctly stated the prevailing sentiment. "It cannot be told now," he says, "who it will be best to select for the ensuing contest. Whoever he may be I hope he will be a full-grown Republican—no weak-kneed, limber-backed, half-and-half compromiser." On February 1st, "Index," a resident correspondent of *The Ledger* proposed "for President, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, and for Vice President, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania." If the intent of this communication was to stir local political waters, it produced no visible ripples. On March 16th, *The Ledger* observed editorially that it is "almost a certainty" that Lincoln will have a place on the ticket, but in respect to Seward, though mentioning him with favor, it hazarded no opinion. The whole desire was for a strong man whose convictions were in harmony with the spirit of the new party.

The vital purpose back of the Republican movement was the prevention of the further extension of slavery. Paramount to and inseparable from this was the preservation of the Union. Other issues were joined and exerted their little influence, but they were incidental and relative only.

That slavery was not a thing remote, but near, that even here its evils touched and harmed, was suddenly and sharply brought to the notice of the community. On the last Sunday morning in January, two white men having with them two negro girls aged about eleven and fourteen years passed through Fairfield on their way southward. In a short time they were followed by a young man named Allen at whose house they had breakfasted. The behavior of the men and their replies to his inquiries had made him suspicious that they were carrying off the children without proper authority. Warrants for their arrest were secured from Thomas D.



Yours truly
Sam'l Jacobs

Evans, a Justice of the Peace. They were pursued, arrested at Iowaville, and brought back for examination. One was committed to jail and one released on bond. The bond was signed by Col. James Thompson, Samuel Jacobs and Wm. H. Hamilton. The preliminary hearing was scarcely ended when the sheriff of Johnson county appeared and took the men in custody on the charge of kidnapping. They were taken to Iowa City for trial. The moral of the incident was not lost.

A State Convention to select a delegation to attend the National Convention of the Democratic party at Charleston was called for February 22d at Des Moines. To provide for their representation, the Democrats of the county met on the 11th of the month at the courthouse. The attendance was small. A platform of eighteen planks was offered for adoption. This dealt with various phases of the slavery question, declared for homesteads, and instructed for Douglas "through evil as well as good report." There was some difference of opinion among those present. Charles Negus opposed the promulgation of a platform. He was also against an instruction for Douglas, whom he considered popular neither at the North nor at the South. On the other hand, Col. James Thompson thought the principles of Democracy could not be published too often, and asserted that Douglas was the best man living since Jackson's time. Bernhart Henn approved the passing of resolutions and the giving of instructions. James A. Galliher objected in particular to the declaration in favor of homesteads. The opposition obtaining no material support, the original proposals were sustained.

On March 16th, a number of Republicans planned an organization, which upon the suggestion of Dr. Charles S. Clarke was called the "Irrepressible Republican Club of Fairfield." The name indicated an acceptance of the truth of William H. Seward's memorable expression. On the 23d, the principles to which its members subscribed were enunciated. The chief articles were these:

That the Constitution confers upon Congress sovereign power over the territories of the United States for their government, and that in the exercise of this power it is both the right and duty of Con-

gress to prohibit in its territories those twin relics of barbarism, Polygamy and Slavery.

That the States of this Union possess sovereign power within their own limits respectively over all matters wherein the power is not delegated to the Congress by the Constitution; and that neither Congress nor sister states have any right to interfere with Slavery or any other institution existing in any state.

The officers were Samuel Mount, president; Sumner M. Bickford, vice president; Wm. S. Moore, secretary; J. H. Beatty, corresponding secretary; and W. M. Clark, treasurer. Meetings were held regularly on Friday evening of each week.

The rupture in the Charleston Convention in the last days of April brought temporary dismay to the Democrats. In contrast with this the conduct of the Chicago Convention and its nominations on May 18th increased the ardor of the Republicans. The result was announced in exuberant strain. "Republican Freemen of old Jefferson! after a long, long drouth the Earth rejoiceth in the abundant rains, and the long deferred hope of the husbandman in a harvest of plenty returneth, and by the wisdom of our Representatives at Chicago the long deferred hope of the American Patriot is startled into new life." On May 30th, they ratified and celebrated the choice of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin as their standard bearers. A torchlight procession with suggestive transparencies honored the "Railsplitter" and made sport of the "irrepressible conflict" between Douglas and Buchanan. Songs and speeches followed. One song, written for the "Irrepressible Club," was entitled "Lincoln of the West":

From vale to hill, from hill to vale,
Hear ye the bugle blast,
What shouts are borne on every gale
For Lincoln of the West,
For Lincoln of the West, my boys,
For Lincoln of the West;
The champion of Freedom's cause
Is Lincoln of the West.

No truer heart than his can guide
The Ship of State to rest—
A nation's heart now turns with pride
To Lincoln of the West,

To Lincoln of the West, my boys,
To Lincoln of the West;
The champion of Freedom's cause
Is Lincoln of the West.

The reign of misrule long we've borne—
By burthens sore oppressed,
And for relief the people turn
To Lincoln of the West,
To Lincoln of the West, my boys,
To Lincoln of the West;
The champion of Freedom's cause
Is Lincoln of the West.

Let every heart and hand now join
To bring the day thrice blessed
The nation shall her trust consign
To Lincoln of the West,
To Lincoln of the West, my boys,
To Lincoln of the West;
The champion of Freedom's cause
Is Lincoln of the West.

Another popular song by the same author contains more of the vernacular. It was called "Old Abe Lincoln":

Republicans will sing tonight
A tune renowned in story;
It filled the freeman with delight
On many a field of glory.
O, Lincoln is the man to lead
Our noble hosts to battle;
He's fit to be our President,
Or drive a team of cattle.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yes, indeed we can, sir,
With Abe we'll beat their little Dug,
Or any other man, sir!

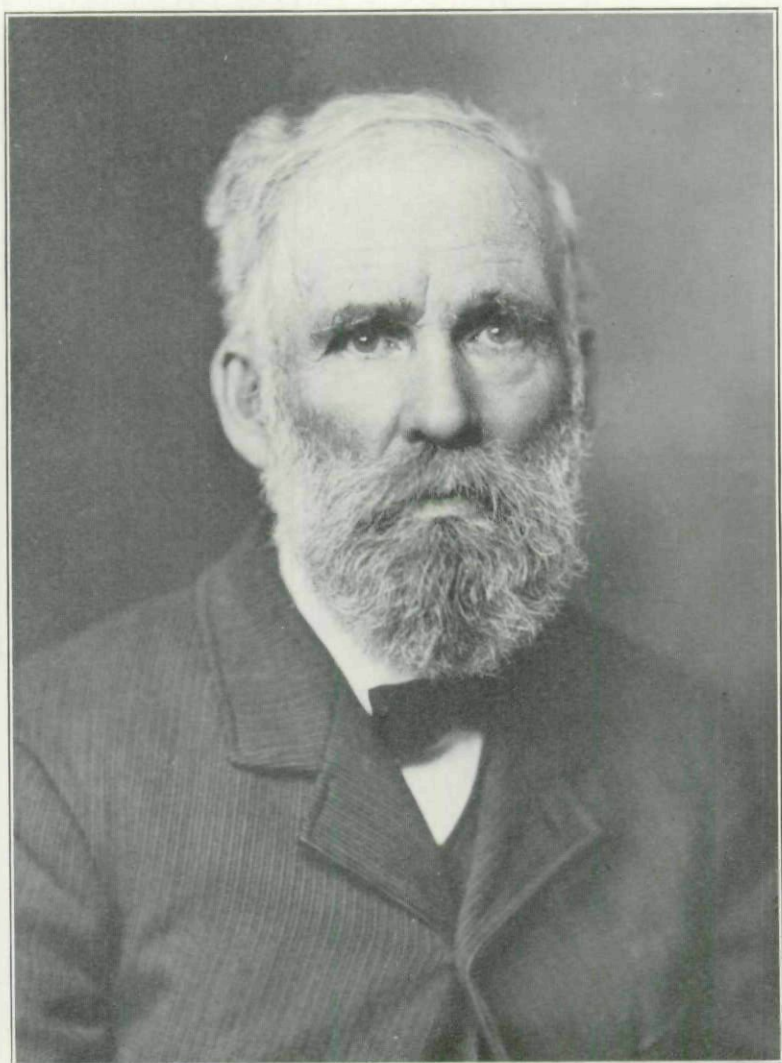
O, long enough Buchanan's crew
Have lived by public plunder,
So now Old Abe will trot them through
And surely give them thunder.
The Little Giant's "cake is dough,"
And Buck may feel forlorn, sir,
For to the White House Abe will go
As sure as he is born, sir!

Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yes, indeed we can, sir,
With Abe we'll beat their little Dug,
Or any other man, sir!

We know Old Abe is bound to win
On every field of fight, sir;
The Little Giant can't come in,
Nor "hold a candle" quite, sir;
And now the battle's drawing nigh,
We'll meet the foe I'm think'n',
And this shall be our battle-cry—
Hurrah for Old Abe Lincoln!
Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yes, indeed we can, sir,
With Abe we'll beat their little Dug,
Or any other man, sir!

A Republican pole of oak, one hundred and six feet long, was raised on June 9th at Glasgow. It was crowned with evergreens, emblematic of "ever-enduring principles," arranged to resemble "the proud bird of America, that soars above all others." Below these was a streamer of calico to signify sympathy and association with "workingmen," not with "slave-drivers in their broadcloths and satins." After the pole was set, the Stars and Stripes were run up and then a banner, inscribed on one side with "Lincoln and Hamlin, Union and Victory," and on the other side with "The Territories for Free White Men." Speeches were made by D. P. Stubbs, Howard Brown and A. R. Pierce.

On June 14th, the "Republican Wide Awakes of Fairfield" were organized. Their company has the distinction of being the first one formed in the State. Each member was obliged to provide himself with a cap, cloak and torch, or to pay two dollars into the treasury for which these articles were furnished him. He agreed also to "hold himself in readiness to take part in torch-light processions during the Presidential campaign, to perform escort duty, to attend the night meetings and grand rallies of the party, and to act as a Vigilance Committee on election day." He further pledged his honor that "on all public occasions" he would "refrain from using



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profane language, or noisy demonstration," and that he would "implicitly obey the orders of his officers and comport himself in a decent and respectful manner." James F. Wilson was the first to put his name to the "constitution." Some others who subscribed to it that night were Dr. C. S. Clarke, Robert F. Rateliff, J. A. McKemey, S. M. Bickford, George Howell, Samuel E. Biglow, G. A. Wells, Harry Jordan, S. Light and W. W. Junkin. For their officers, they elected G. A. Wells, captain, and Dr. C. S. Clarke, lieutenant, A. R. Fulton, secretary and F. B. McConnell, treasurer. Captain Wells and Lieutenant Clarke resigned their positions without serving and were succeeded by Alvin Turner as captain and J. W. Shaffer as lieutenant. The musicians were W. H. Sheward, John R. Shaffer and A. R. Rusch. The activities of this body of men were remarkable. During the campaign they traveled forty miles by railroad and one hundred and eighty-seven miles in wagons, visiting and marching at Glasgow, Birmingham, Libertyville, Agency City, Brookville, Washington, Salina and Abingdon.

The Republicans at Brookville, equally alert, on June 16th formed a club of which John Gantz was president, Joshua Wright, vice president, Samuel Robb, secretary, J. Bardine, corresponding secretary, and Thomas Griffin, treasurer.

The Baltimore Convention met on June 18th and on the 23d nominated Douglas and Fitzpatrick. About this time occurred the organization of the "National Democratic Club of Fairfield." On June 30th, a ratification of these nominations took place at Fairfield. It was described by Samuel Jacobs as an "imposing demonstration of the Democracy." The enthusiasm must have been tempered with considerable chagrin as it was then known that Fitzpatrick had declined the honor of a place on the Democratic National ticket.

From this time till the day of election both parties marshaled their forces with an increasing earnestness. Meetings were held in every school house and in every grove where people were wont to assemble. Work in field and shop and store was neglected that the discussions and debates over the issues involved might be heard and the arguments weighed.

The action and incidents of this period are not to be traced in detail. A glance here and there at them will portray their characteristic aspects.

The "Union Republican Club of Abingdon," organized on July 7th with John H. Webb as president, Cyrus McCracken as vice president, W. M. Campbell as secretary and David Peters as treasurer, set out briefly and clearly the Republican position as locally understood. Its announcement was devotion to the Constitution and Union, opposition to the interference with slavery in the States and determination to resist by all constitutional means its further extension.

Near the close of July, Republican badges of white satin ribbon, printed by W. W. Junkin, began to be worn. The design bore at the top an eagle in flight, a scroll in its beak and a flag in its talons. Below was the legend, "The Union must and shall be preserved," and the quatrain,

The glorious cause is moving on,
The cause once led by Washington!
The cause that made our Fathers free,
The cause of glorious Liberty!

Then came the portrait of Lincoln, the lines "For President, Abraham Lincoln, For Vice President, Hannibal Hamlin," and the expressive phrases, "Free Homes, Free Territory!" Next an unfurled standard and a cannon in the act of discharge illustrated and emphasized "Protection to American Liberty!" This stanza was last:

Huzza, boys, for Lincoln and Hamlin,
Let the banner of Liberty wave;
With Lincoln and Hamlin our bosoms
Will beat to the march of the brave!

"It occurred to me," wrote a correspondent of the *Jeffersonian* just after Republicans on August 25th at Coalport had raised a pole one hundred and fifteen feet high surmounted by a new broom, "that if you could have been here, and compared our stalwart squatter sovereigns with the dissipated, sickly-looking, counter-jumping Wide Awakes that make night hideous with their sulphurous lampsmoke

and their screams for Lincoln, you would have thought with us that our part of the county, to say the least, was all right for Douglas and Johnson."

"The Wide Awake company of Fairfield," "Wide Awake" responded, "is composed of 85 members, and represents 35 different, useful and honorable occupations, as follows:

Attorneys 4, Blacksmiths 3, Banker 1, Bookseller 1, Butcher 1, Clerks 13, Commission Merchant 1, Cattle Dealer 1, Carpenters 2, Coopers 3, Cabinet Makers 2, Coal Digger 1, Druggists 2, Editor 1, Farmers 13, Grocers 4, Harness Makers 5, Jeweler 1, Land Agent 1, Lumber Dealer 1, Law Students 4, Laborers 2, Millers 2, Painter 1, Printer 1, Plasterers 2, Physician 1, Sawyer 1, Surveyor 1, Shoemakers 2, Tailor 1, Tanners 2, School Teacher 1, Teamster 1, Wagon Maker 1. It will be observed also," he concluded, "that there are as many of the 'stalwart' hard-fisted yeomanry in the company as there are 'counter-jumpers.'"

The "Lincoln Rangers" of Brookville and Locust Grove township, a company of seventy horsemen, was organized near the end of August with J. A. Ireland as captain.

In the park at Fairfield, on September 1st, six young men debated political issues. The Republican point of view was presented by G. B. Kirkpatrick, I. N. Elliott and George Strong; the Democratic, by R. J. Mohr, A. G. Thompson and W. A. Jones.

Noting that the torches, the martial music and the marching of the Wide Awakes, attracted and excited the public, the Democrats finally adopted a similar expedient to recover the favor felt to be slipping away. They found no happy common name to apply to their organizations. In different localities they were variously "Invincibles," "Bell Ringers," "Ever Readies," "Guards," and what nots. A company formed at Fairfield about the middle of September was called "The True Blues." Their insignia were "hickory shirts trimmed with red" and red transparencies.

On October 5th, a notable Republican meeting was held at Glasgow. Prominent in the procession of the morning was the "Swede delegation" in twelve or fifteen wagons, the

leading one drawn by six horses and having on each side the inscription, "We come to this country for Freedom—not Slavery!" Another noticeable feature was a wagon containing thirty-four young women with banners. Thirty-three of them dressed in white personified the States of the Union; the one, Miss Caroline Unkrich, clad entirely in black, symbolized "bleeding Kansas." A free dinner was served. The event of the afternoon was a speech by James F. Wilson. In the evening, the Wide Awakes paraded. Owen Bromley, "the coal digger," afterward addressed them. Those from a distance remained over night. The evidence of the home of a Republican was a maul placed on the fence in front of the house. Where this sign was, whoever entered was welcomed and cared for.

The Republican rally of October 17th was "the greatest meeting in Iowa" and in numbers has not since been equalled at Fairfield. The crowds came from every direction. Wide Awakes came from New London, Mt. Pleasant, Salem, Rome, Eddyville, Ottumwa, Kirkville, Agency City, Bloomfield, Drakeville, Troy, Sigourney, Richland, Martinsburg, South English, Dutch Creek, Washington, Brighton, Richmond, Jackson, Keosauqua, Bentonsport, Bonaparte, Winchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and Pleasant Plain. From Agency City came a company of women who wore white dresses, blue sashes around their waists, and jaunty caps trimmed with ribbon. They carried spears to which "Lincoln and Hamlin flags" were fastened. From somewhere came another company of women who styled themselves "Daughters of Abraham." There came "Minute Men of 1860," and "Lincoln Guards," each accompanied by a lady, all mounted, and scores of other horsemen. There came wagons by hundreds. From as many different localities, there came nine representations by girls of "the thirty-three States and Kansas." These groups were drawn by teams of six and eight horses. From Abingdon and Brookville, behind twenty-five yoke of cattle, came a huge float on which various men were engaged in blacksmithing, carpentering, broom-making, sugar-making and other occupations.

A procession was formed which was five miles in length. There were the usual attempts to ridicule the party and candidates in opposition. An effigy of Douglas wore on the hat the unfortunate statement, "I don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down." Numerous banners exhibited devices of evanescent flavor.

The afternoon was devoted to speeches. Three stands in the park were in constant use. The speakers were Governor Kirkwood, Senator Grimes, Senator Harlan, J. W. Thomassen of Chicago, John A. Kasson of Des Moines, Kramer of Michigan, John W. Rankin of Keokuk, Alvin Saunders of Mt. Pleasant and A. M. Scott of Fairfield.

At night twenty-two hundred torches flamed in the parade of the Wide Awakes. "Sky-rockets and Roman candles increased the effectiveness of the display. Many visitors who took part in this waited for another day to take their departure. A few slept in their wagons, but most of them were entertained by citizens. Democrats for the time put aside partisanship and opened hospitable doors.

The next week the Democrats made an effort to outdo this gathering. It failed on account of unpropitious weather.

In Jefferson county there were cast 1,462 ballots for Lincoln, 1,245 ballots for Douglas, and 38 ballots for Bell. The Republicans were jubilant. To them it seemed, and the feeling found expression in this quotation:

O, such a day,
So fought, so followed, and so fairly won,
Came not till now, to dignify the times,
Since Caesar's fortune.

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